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Sen. Jason Allen commends President Bush's commitment to clean up the Great Lakes

Lansing – State Sen. Jason Allen (R-Traverse City) commended President George W. Bush on his efforts to clean up the Great Lakes.

The head of the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency announced last week that Bush plans to ask Congress for \$45 million for Great Lakes cleanup in his 2005 budget, more than quadruple the amount in this year's budget.

“I am grateful that the Great Lakes are a priority for President Bush,” Allen said. “Keeping the water quality of our lakes and rivers high will protect Michigan’s greatest natural resource. I praise the president for working to preserve one of our nation’s most precious environmental treasures.”

The money would be used to start or accelerate cleanup of four to six rivers and harbors on the EPA’s “Areas of Concern” list with higher levels of contamination.

St. Mary’s River in Sault Ste. Marie is included on the list of “Areas of Concern” in need of funding to conduct sediment remediation.

“These funds would make a significant contribution in helping restore the St. Mary’s River to its natural qualities,” Allen said. “While contamination levels may not be dangerous, this issue needs to be addressed to ensure that the river remains safe for generations to come.”

According to the EPA, the river’s water quality has been severely impaired and sediments have become contaminated to a level that warrants attention before contamination levels become threatening.

Priorities for restoring St. Mary’s River includes cleanup of the Superfund site, sea lamprey control, and elimination of combined sewer overflows.

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